



Red Tail Flyer

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www.afnews.af.mil/internal/papers/Balad.pdf

April 15, 2005

Balad receives new radio station

*107.3 FM,
93.3 FM gives
Airmen choice
in music*

By Senior Airman
Colleen Wronek

332nd AEW Public Affairs

Balad Airmen now have a choice when it comes to music.

The base received a second radio station last week when an extra transmitter became available.

"During one of our maintenance rounds, we found an extra set of transmitters," said Master Sgt. Richard Horton, 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron Armed Forces Network Iraq maintenance NCOIC. "We reclaimed the transmitters and were able to double the output power of the original transmitter and bring a second channel to Balad."

The original channel, 107.3 FM, is still broadcasting Freedom Radio AFN-Iraq and has a stronger signal, while the second channel, 93.3 FM, is rebroadcast from March Air Reserve Base, Calif.

The new channel is currently programmed to play Z-Rock, a contemporary rock station. However, leadership has the

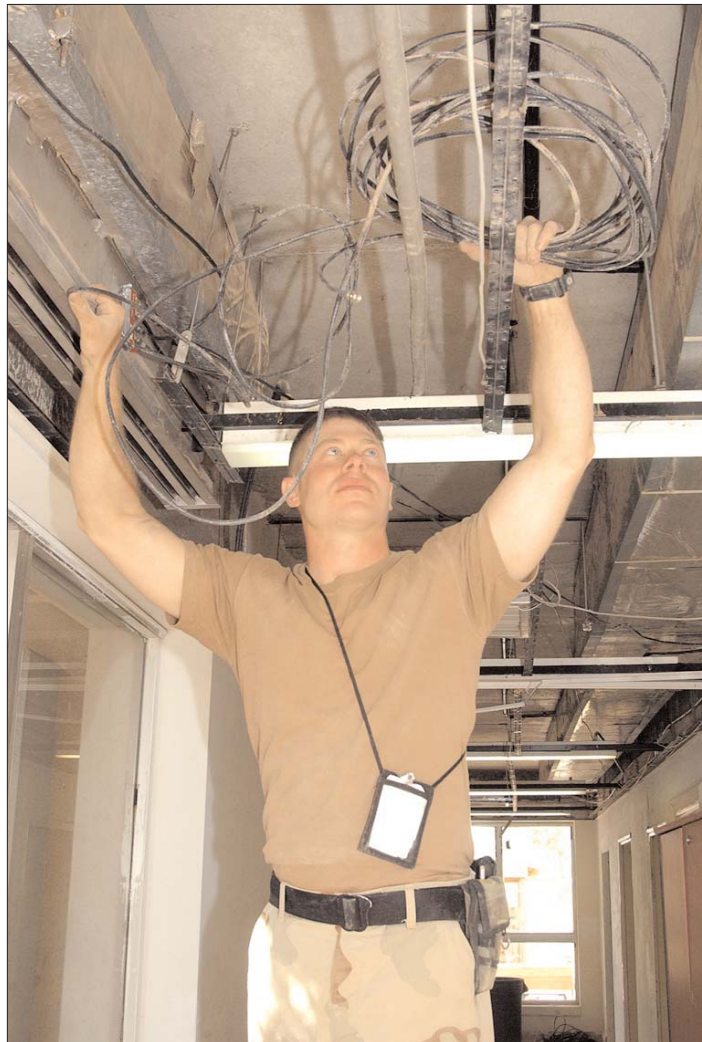


Photo Illustration By Senior Colleen Wronek

Airmen 1st Class Matt Bowman, 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron broadcast maintenance technician, installs cable television wire in the communications squadron building.

ability to change its programming.

"If leadership wants a certain program on 93.3 we can change

the service being broadcast on the station," said Sergeant Horton, whose home station is Ramstein AB, Germany. "If

people want to listen to a certain type of music at a certain time and base leadership approves it, we can broadcast that service."

Sergeant Horton said Balad was already authorized two radio stations.

"There is a requirement to provide two radio stations and cable TV at each of the main bases in Iraq," he said. "We just needed the extra equipment to make it happen here."

Balad's broadcast maintainers travel often. They take care of 50 transmitters and more than 4,000 decoders in Iraq. A decoder is a small box, which takes a satellite signal and decodes the signal to be used on the radio or TV's.

"We provide technical support to anything AFN related, including providing cable service and radio and TV maintenance at bases throughout the country," Sergeant Horton said.

Balad's broadcast maintainers are also connecting AFN cable service in each of Balad's buildings.

"We are currently working on installing cable in the comm. squadron building," said Airmen 1st Class Matt Bowman, 332nd ECS broadcast maintenance technician from Vandenberg AFB, Calif. "I help boost morale throughout the

See RADIO page 2

Know entitlements

File voucher, check LES after deployment

By Senior Airman Colleen Wronek

332nd AEW Public Affairs

As AEF 3/4 comes to an end, many people are dreaming about heading home and not worrying about money.

Money matters and pay are important things to take care of when in processing home stations.

"It is important to get your voucher filed once you return," said Staff Sgt. Ricardo Phillips, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing finance customer service. "This alone will help you avoid getting overpaid any desert entitlements in addition to receiving whatever is due to you."

Sergeant Phillips said during a typical four month deployment, servicemembers are entitled to hostile fire pay totaling \$900, hardship duty pay totaling \$400, tax exemption, per diem totaling \$420 and family separation, if applicable, totaling \$1,000.

"Hostile fire pay and tax exemption should stop the last month you are in the AOR," said Sergeant Phillips, whose deployed from Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. "You should also receive a lump sum payment of Hardship Duty Pay at \$100 a month for the amount of months you were deployed. In addition, people with dependants should file for family separation allowance

when they turn in their voucher."

Sergeant Phillips said leave earned while deployed is tax exempt.

"If you sell leave earned in the AOR during reenlistment/separation/retirement, it will not be taxed," he said. "If you decide to use tax exempt leave during a month you are receiving tax exemption, it will not have any effect on your pay, but if you use leave during a normal month where you are taxed, it will reduce your federal taxes by the number of tax free leave days you use. The general rule with leave is 'last leave earned is first leave used.'"

To avoid pay discrepancies, Sergeant Phillips said it is imperative to get travel vouchers filed and to review what was paid so entitlements and reimbursements weren't missed on the voucher.

"Everything claimed on your accrual voucher will have to be re-claimed on your final voucher," he said. "By reviewing your final voucher settlements and LES's you're helping us identify discrepancies. Remember, only you know the specifics of your TDY. Our role is to interpret the information and pay accordingly."

Sergeant Phillips added if discrepancies are found in someone's pay, they should contact their finance office and then follow up.

CHECK CASHING

The 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Finance will not accept checks, that can't be sent through the electronic scanner from April 23 through May 2.

Checks not accepted include two party checks, money orders and versa checks.

Finance will adjust check cashing limits for those affected.

For more information, call Tech. Sgt. Mark Howard at 443-6007

RADIO Continued from page 1

country by supplying radio and television service and satellite feeds. Having these entertainment mediums helps people escape their day-to-day stress."

Sergeant Horton said the broadcast maintenance team is usually working off site three weeks out of the month.

"We provide American TV and radio to deployed servicemembers who otherwise wouldn't have this touch of home in theater," Sergeant Horton added. "Having another station provides an alternate source of radio to listen to and the ability to change its programming as the base sees fit."

To make a song request on 107.3 FM, e-mail afn.baghdadforum.com.



Praise and Worship Concert





The 332nd AEW chapel is giving a final hurrah to AEF 3/4 by inviting everyone to attend a Praise and Worship concert from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Friday in the Town Hall.






Comm Squadron makes mission possible

By Senior Airman
Colleen Wronek

332nd AEW Public Affairs

Miles of wires weaving information through walls and underground pathways connect each facility together to form a network so Airmen can make a phone call or log on to a computer and accomplish their mission.

Communication is what most people take for granted. Having a working phone or computer is considered an everyday occurrence, but without the help of the 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron, Balad might be a very different place.

"Comm. touches everybody," said 1st Lt. Shawn Prosser, 332nd ECS mission's systems flight deputy commander. "Without our guys, you can't have communications, and without communications, you can't accomplish the mission."

The communications squadron provides secure data and user access to 2,500 NIPRnet users, 1,500 SIPRnet users and 1,830 phone numbers off the base switch. And it all begins with laying copper and fiber optic wiring.

"The engineering and installation team installs all outside cabling so all Air Force buildings and facilities are networked to the communications squadron," said Chris Salas 332nd ECS ITT site lead/engineer. "We'll receive work orders, which tell us where the cabling is needed. Then we dig trenches and add pipes to lay the cable underground."

Working with copper wire, which is used for phones, and working with fiber optic cable, which is used for computers, can be very difficult outside.



Photo by Senior Airman Colleen Wronek

Tech Sgt. Will Bellamy, 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron network managements NCOIC, patches a computer into a network switch. The 332nd ECS works together to provide communication means throughout the base.

"The heat in the summer and the mud in the winter are rough on the wires and crews when they are working in man holes for hours," Mr. Salas said. "We also run into difficulties obtaining materials, equipment and using existing infrastructures."

After the wire has been placed in the ground, the last 400 feet, a comm. concept for connecting the base infrastructure to the user, is installed inside the buildings.

"My folks are the middle men. We take Mr. Salas' heavy trenching and install the last bit in the buildings and HAS's so personnel can receive data and have telephones," said Lieutenant Prosser, whose home station is Cannon AFB, N.M.

Lieutenant Prosser also said since December they have com-

pleted 900 trouble tickets or fix actions, 290 work orders and laid over 20 miles of wiring for new communication's installation.

"When we first got here, 75 percent of our work was repairing communications lines," he said. "A lot of damage occurred to these lines due to the harsh environment and the nature of tactical installs."

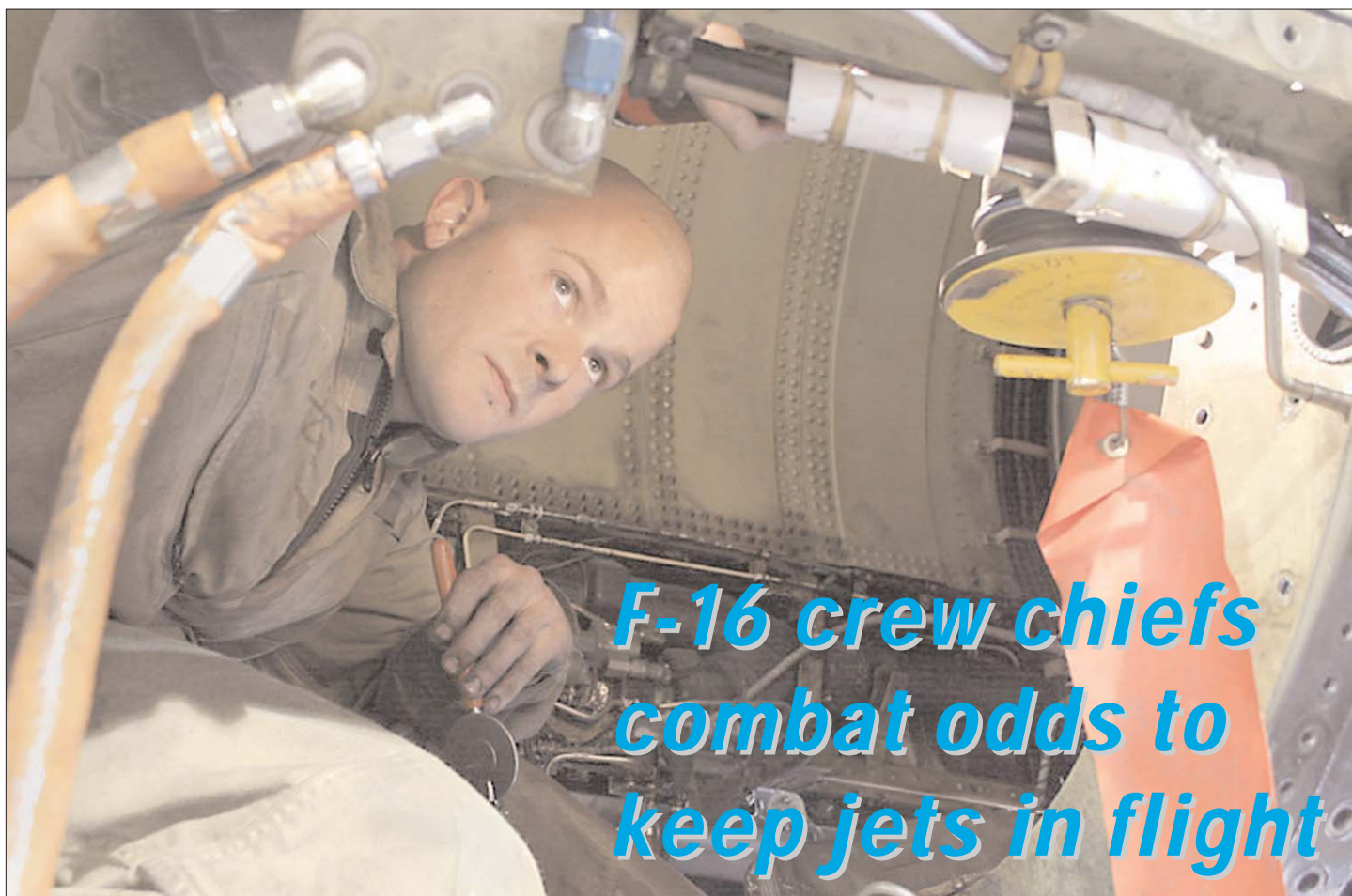
Buildings are ready to be networked to the 332nd ECS once the wiring has been installed.

"A lot of people think its plug and play. You can't plug in your computer or phone and think it's on the Balad network," said Tech Sgt. Will Bellamy, 332nd ECS network managements NCOIC. "Once the wiring is installed, we assess the building for the customers' needs. We

then create a new virtual local area network if the customer is new to the base and we install a switch that connects to the main switch. There's a lot of programming and behind-the-scenes work involved. You not only satisfy the customer's current needs, but you have to think of future requirements as well."

Sergeant Bellamy, whose home station is Barksdale AFB, La. said communications are key to everything and it has been a privilege to provide communications to Balad.

"It's nice to know we're leaving the base better than what we found it," he said. "I work with a great team and together we make communicating happen on Balad."



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Adam Bradford

Senior Airman Lance Murphy, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, inspects the engine bay of an F-16 prior to engine installation.



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Adam Bradford

Staff Sgt. Matthew Perry, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, and Capt. Matthew Brockhaus, 34th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, run toward an F-16 for a practice alert launch.

By Staff Sgt.
Lindsey Maurice

332nd AEW Public Affairs

As the sun beats down upon him, Airman Murphy wipes the sweat from his brow, spreading the layer of grease and oil from his hands onto his forehead. Consumed by the task at hand he remains focused knowing his jet needs to be ready for takeoff within the hour.

Suddenly his work is put on hold.

"This is Panther, alarm red, alarm red, all personnel don your individual protective gear and take cover at the nearest shelter," comes a voice over the base intercom. He follows instruction and waits patiently for the all clear so he can eager-

ly dive back into his work.

He is accustomed to such working conditions by now -- the extreme summer heat, freezing winter cold, and pouring rain. The long hours and necessity to stop what he's doing and seek shelter are all a part of his routine -- he is an F-16 crew chief -- what he does isn't a job -- it's a lifestyle.

"As a crew chief you have to enjoy working in the cold, in the heat and in the rain. You have to enjoy getting your hands dirty and putting in the long hours," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Perry, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron F-16 crew chief. "But seeing your jet takeoff two or three times a day and return home safely each time -- that's the real reward.

Having that pilot climb out and say 'great job chief' makes it worth it."

With about 38 crew chiefs to maintain the F-16s at Balad the maintainers are always busy.

Here we have half the amount of jets that we do back home and they're still flying just as many missions if not more, so it can get pretty hectic at times," said Staff Sgt. Robert Baldwin, 332nd EAMXS assistant flight chief. "We always have to be on top of our game here. There isn't room for errors."

As crew chiefs, each Airman needs to have basic knowledge in all systems related to their aircraft, including its avionics, weapons and electrical systems.

"An F-16 crew chief is like a NASCAR crew chief," said Sergeant Perry. "We have to know what we're doing and act quickly."

Some of the tasks crew chiefs are responsible for include towing aircraft; basic postflight, preflight and walk around inspections of the aircraft; acceptance and transfer inspections, ground handling operations, launch and recovery, and aircraft maintenance.

But as Sergeant Baldwin noted, these tasks take time to learn and lots of training in order to be proficient in them.

Every crew chief has to graduate two technical schools totaling nine months of training before they can claim their title. Then, like every Air Force career they have upgrade and on-the-job training as well.

"The work these guys are putting out here is phenomenal," said Sergeant Baldwin. "We deployed with half our people still doing CDC's, awaiting upgrade to 5 or 7-level or just graduating technical school. In the short time we have been here they have not only had to dive into their jobs but make sure they study for upgrade as well. They're all doing great."

Sergeant Baldwin especially noted the one team, one fight mentality all the crew chiefs carry here.

"There really is a lot of work that goes into every jet on the flightline," said Sergeant Baldwin. "We usually put in about 12-14 hours of work a day. But everything we do, we do as a team. We start our day together and we end it together. We're a family out here."

So come heat, cold, rain, endless days and alarm reds, the crew chiefs of the 332nd EAMXS remain focused on the mission and continue to make sure their jets takeoff and come back safely every day.



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Adam Bradford

Senior Airman Frankie Jordan, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, recovers Capt. Andy Stockman's bag upon the captain's return from a mission. The captain is an F-16 pilot with the 34th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Adam Bradford

Senior Airman Shawn Justus (left) and Airman 1st Class Colin Muller, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chiefs, prepare for an 800-hour leading edge flap torque tube removal and inspection on an F-16.

When in doubt go back to the basics

By Lt. Col. Robert Skinner

332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron

As I sat at my desk pondering what to write, I recalled a phrase my dad used to say, "When in doubt, go back to the basics." In this dynamic, fast-paced environment, our ability to master the basics is critical.

To use a football analogy, coaches spend more time on "blocking and tackling" than they do on the ol' flea-flicker pass play.

The reason: steady, consistent play builds a good solid winning team ripe for success. An undisciplined team may get lucky sometimes with a big play, but the disciplined team doesn't leave anything to chance.

Instead they focus on doing the little things right, which makes the big play more of a calculated risk than a desperate, lucky shot.

To relate "back to the basics" in this environment, I'd ask each person to periodically perform a self-analysis and ensure you haven't lost the following five basics.

First and foremost, tell the truth. Are you always honest even with the little things, even when nobody is around? Do you put 100 percent effort into a job, "cut corners," or do a task to just barely get by?

These situations highlight honesty, which is the most important trait and the building block for success. In a world of growing complexity, leaders are increasingly dependent on honest work and receiving the right information to make the right decision, whether it's good or not.

The second point is give your own opinion and ideas.

"An undisciplined team may get lucky sometimes with a big play, but the disciplined team doesn't leave anything to chance."

Lt. Col. Robert Skinner
332nd Expeditionary
Communications Squadron
commander

There is a tendency to tell people what you think they want to hear. Never do this. Nobody has a monopoly on good ideas. This is what makes our military the finest.

Additionally, we owe it to our bosses to share all of our information and express our opinions, especially if you have reservations about a particular decision.

Remember to do this in private and once the dust has settled, carry out the decision like it was your own.

The opposite of expressing your views is listening.

Listening is a trait that is easier talked about than practiced. Have you ever found yourself conversing with others and your mind wanders? Or someone tells you something and ten minutes later you've forgotten what they said?

In this environment truly listening can be the difference between life and death. I've always tried to abide by the rule that when someone talks to you, act like they are the only person in the world and give them your undivided attention.

The next step is taking charge of situations.

Do you actively seek out ways to make things better? Do you try to anticipate problems before they occur? This is what separates the average from the excellent.

You can't just sit back and wait to be told what to do or wait for work to find you. Look at the processes in your shop, do some homework or research and find ways to do things better.

When you deploy, you may be working in a completely different shop, but that's ok, it's much easier to train you to do a new job than instill initiative. Only you can instill initiative.

Finally, are you an optimist or pessimist? A pessimist sees a glass half empty an optimist sees a glass half full. Retired Gen. Colin Powell once said, "Perpetual Optimism is a true force multiplier."

As you're working ten, twelve, fourteen hour days and things aren't going as planned, you'd be amazed at how much a simple smile or "pat on the back" will do for someone's morale.

None of the above is rocket science and most have heard these traits during their childhood.

We can all use these as building blocks: be honest, share your ideas, be willing to listen to other ideas, put these ideas into action to make things better and always be optimistic.

Sometimes when the mission is fast paced, tough and overwhelming we lose track and it's good to take a few moments to think and get back into the game.

Remember, most of us are here for 120 days. We need to use all the above traits from day 1 through day 120. That is how we accomplish the mission and strengthen our Airmen.

Got a story?

Know someone in your unit who has a unique story/hobby, or are you interested in writing a story?

Call The Red Tail Flyer at 443-6005 or e-mail:

redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil



Defense briefs

Officials announce Thrift Savings Plan open season

Randolph AFB, Texas – Civilian and military employees can sign up for, or change, their Thrift Savings Plan contribution amounts during the “open season,” which runs now through June 30.

This open season applies only to regular TSP contributions. It does not include TSP catch-up contributions.

TSP offers investors the chance for lower taxes each year they contribute while not having to pay taxes on earnings until they reach retirement. Investment money is deposited directly from each pay-check.

The five TSP funds are: the Government Securities Investment (G) Fund; the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund; the Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund; the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund; and the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

TSP officials said they also hope to make “Lifecycle” funds available mid-2005. Lifecycle funds are “target asset allocation portfolios” that will hold a mix of the five funds currently available. The mix of funds is chosen based on the date the employee expects to need money for retirement. More information is available online at www.tsp.gov/curinfo/specint/LFC-Qs&As.html.

Contribution elections and/or changes made between now and June 11 will take effect June 12, for servicemembers and civilians. Changes made on or after June 12 will become effective at the beginning of the pay period following the one in which the election is made for civilians and the following month for military.

Public Law 108-469, signed into law Dec. 21, will eliminate TSP open seasons. The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board is implementing this law July 1. As a result, beginning July 1, civilian employees and servicemembers may start, change, stop or resume contributions at any time. For civilians, the elections will be effective at the beginning of the pay period following the one in which submitted, and for military members elections will be effective the following month.

Some of the specifics of the program include:

- Servicemembers can contribute as much as 10 percent of their base pay, as long as the annual total of tax-deferred investment is not more than \$14,000 for 2005. Airmen also have the ability to invest all or part of their bonuses or special pay.
- Those serving in tax-free combat zones are allowed up to \$42,000 in annual contributions.
- Airmen can enroll through the Defense Finance and Accounting Service Web site at www.dfas.mil/emss/. They can also enroll by filling out a form TSP-U-1 at local military personnel flights, finance offices and family support centers.
- Contribution allocations (how an employee chooses to invest money among the five funds) can be made by calling the TSP automated ThriftLine at (877) 968-3778 for people in the 50 States, Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and Canada, or (504) 255-8777 for people elsewhere, or on the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov/. For general TSP questions, call the Air Force Personnel Contact Center at (800) 616-3775.

Specific TSP information is available for Airmen at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/mpf/TSP/thrift_savings_plan.htm.

Meet your neighbor



Senior Airman Anthony Nelson

Home station: Barksdale AFB, La.

Unit: 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron

Hobbies: I enjoy the Honor Guard, volleyball and movies.

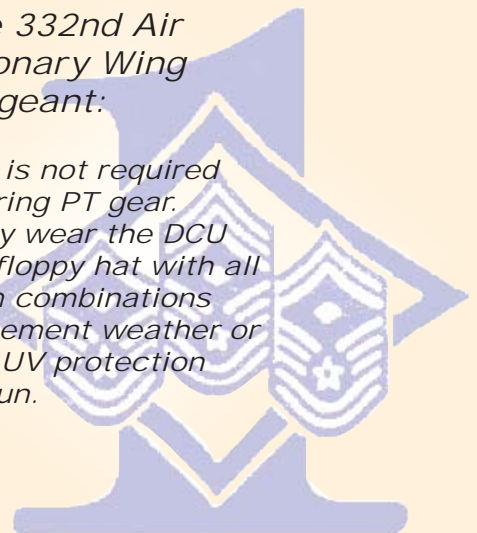
How do you contribute to the mission? I make sure computer systems can talk to each other be it mission essential reports on SIPRNET, predator feeds to local battle commanders or browsing the Internet at the morale tent.

What is your favorite aspect of this deployment? Everyday is different with a new problem to solve. It makes the time go quickly and there is always something new to learn.

Besides your family, what do you miss back home? I miss taking night classes, my car and TV commercials.

From the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing First Sergeant:

Head gear is not required while wearing PT gear. People may wear the DCU 8-point or floppy hat with all PT uniform combinations during inclement weather or to provide UV protection from the sun.



Air Force Religious Schedule

Worship concert – A praise and worship concert is from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Friday in the Town Hall.

Protestant

Sundays:

9 a.m. • Traditional – Hospital
11 a.m. • Contemporary Worship – Town Hall
5:30 p.m. • Inspirational Worship – H-6 Chapel

Roman Catholic

Daily:

When Catholic Chaplain is available, Mass • 7:30 p.m. – H-6 Chapel
Confessions – Offered prior to Daily Mass

Saturdays:

7:30 p.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel

Sundays:

9 a.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel
2 p.m. • Mass – CJSOTF Chapel
3:30 p.m. • Mass – JSOAP-AP Chapel

Latter Day Saints

Sundays:

7 p.m. • Sacraments – H-6 Chapel
8 p.m. • Sunday School – H-6 Chapel

Fellowship and Study

Daily:

8:30 p.m. • Band of Brothers Fellowship – H-6 Chapel
9 p.m. • Band of Brothers Prayer – H-6 Chapel

Sundays:

2 p.m. • Protestant Bible Study – Hospital
7 p.m. • Catholic Study – Chapel Fellowship room

Tuesdays:

7:30 p.m. • Purpose Driven Life – Chapel Fellowship room

Wednesdays:

7 p.m. • Purpose Driven Life – Chapel Fellowship room

Thursdays:

5:30 p.m. • Purpose Driven Life – Hospital
7 p.m. • Latter Day Saints Study Group – Chapel Fellowship room

Fridays:

5 p.m. • Experiencing God – Chapel Fellowship room

7:30 p.m. • Women's Bible Study – Hospital

Know what this is?

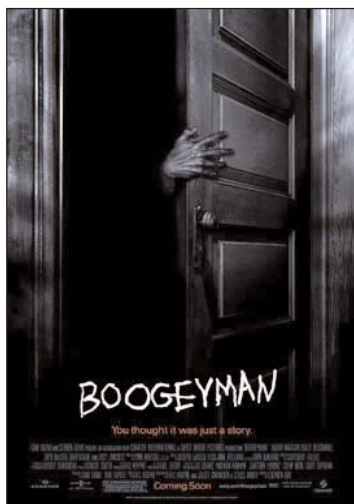


Photo by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

If you can identify the object, send us an e-mail at redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil. The first person with the correct answer wins a \$5 gift certificate courtesy of the 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron. Last week's photo of an orange reflective belt was first identified by Capt. Iven King, 332nd Expeditionary Logistic Readiness Squadron.

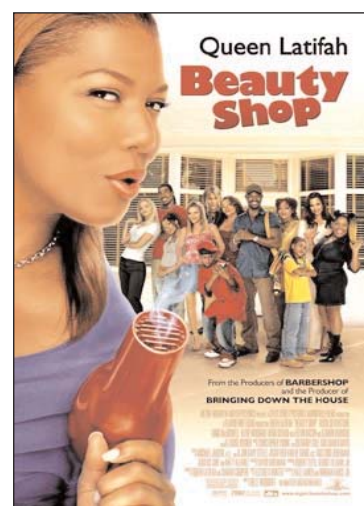
Sustainer Movie Schedule

Schedule is subject to change



Today, April 15
3 p.m. - Boogeyman
6 p.m. - Beauty Shop
9 p.m. - Beauty Shop
Saturday, April 16
3 p.m. - Are We There Yet
6 p.m. - Boogeyman
9 p.m. - Boogeyman
Sunday, April 17
3 p.m. - The Wedding Date
6 p.m. - Beauty Shop
9 p.m. - Are We There Yet
Monday, April 18
3 p.m. - Phantom of the Opera

6 p.m. - Miss Congeniality 2
9 p.m. - Beauty Shop
Tuesday, April 19
3 p.m. - Assault on Precinct 13
7 p.m. - Live Comedy Show
Wednesday, April 20
3 p.m. - Beauty Shop
6 p.m. - Boogeyman
9 p.m. - Constantine
Thursday, April 21
3 p.m. - White Noise
6 p.m. - Beauty Shop
9 p.m. - Boogeyman



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All photos are Air Force photos, unless otherwise indicated.

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